

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00233 242107Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-02 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USDEL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0233

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, IS, EG, JO, XF
SUBJECT: WEST BANK MOOD

1. SUMMARY: THE WEST BANK MOOD, SO HOPEFUL AFTER SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM, HAS BECOME ONE OF DISILLUSIONMENT. SADAT IS GIVEN CREDIT FOR TAKING ON ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TASK; ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE HAS BEEN REVEALED AS HAS US IMPOTENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. LARGE MAJORITY OF WEST BANKERS WARMLY SUPPORTED SADAT'S INITIATIVE. HIS COURAGE IN COMING TO JERUSALEM TO STATE HIS CASE AND HIS INSISTENCE ON A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE WERE WEL-COMED AS A MAJOR EFFORT TO GET STALLED NEGOTIATIONS GOING. WEST BANKERS FOR A TIME WERE OUT IN FRONT OF THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, THE MAYORS, WHO REITERATED THEIR SUPPORT
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PAGE 02 JERUSA 00233 242107Z

FOR THE PLO WHILE POLITELY EXPRESSING RESERVATIONS ABOUT SADAT'S INITIATIVE.

3. ISMAILIA, PUBLICATION OF THE BEGIN PLAN, US STATEMENTS ABOUT THE BEGIN PLAN AND THE PLO, THE COLLAPSE OF POLITICAL TALKS, THE REINFORCING OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN SINAI AND THE CREATION OF NEW SETTLEMENTS

ON THE WEST BANK AND THE GOLAN HAVE CAUSED EUPHORIA TO BE REPLACED BY GLOOM. MODERATES, SUCH AS BETHLEHEM'S FREIJ, SEE BEGIN PLAN AS WORSE THAN MILITARY OCCUPATION. FREIJ ASSERTS BEGIN PLAN WOULD RESULT IN CONTINUED ISRAELI CONTROL OVER OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WITH UNLIMITED ISRAELI RIGHT TO ACQUIRE LAND AND TO SETTLE.

4. U.S. IS SEEN AS WELL-MEANING BUT INEFFECTIVE: REACTION TO REITERATION OF US POSITION THAT WEST BANK/ GAZA SHOULD NOT BE INDEPENDENT HAS BEEN SURPRISINGLY MUTED. WEST BANKERS SEEM TO BELIEVE THAT THIS POSTURE IS DESIGNED TO MOVE BEGIN IN DIRECTION OF WITHDRAWAL. AT SAME TIME, U.S. INABILITY TO PRODUCE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND A HALT TO SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IS SEEN AS CONFIRMATION U.S. IS IMPOTENT WHEN FACED WITH ISRAELI FIRMNESS. DESPITE U.S. STATEMENTS OF DESIRABILITY OF NON-PLO PALESTINIANS PARTICIPATING IN NEGOTIATIONS AFTER DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ACHIEVED AND HUSSEIN JOINS TALKS, NO REPUTABLE WEST BANKERS HAVE PUBLICALLY STATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO DO SO. PRIVATELY SOME MAYORS HAVE TOLD US THAT IN EVENT DECLARATION ACHIEVED AND WAS SUFFICIENT TO INDUCE HUSSEIN TO JOIN NEGOTIATIONS, "EVERYTHING WOULD CHANGE." FOR THE MOMENT, COMMUNISTS, REJECTIONISTS AND PLO HARDLINERS ARE HAVING A FIELD DAY SAYING "I TOLD YOU SO." CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 JERUSA 00233 242107Z

5. DESPITE DOUBTS AND GLOOM, THERS IS STILL RESIDUAL HOPE THAT SADAT MAY YET, WITH U.S. HELP, BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING. AS ONE WEST BANKER RECENTLY STATED, "WE ARE QUIETLY WAITING TO SEE WHAT SADAT CAN ACHIEVE. IF HE SUCCEEDS HE WILL BE A HERO; IF HE FAILS, HE WILL BE A TRAITOR." NEWLIN

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